

Campaign Ideas

Campaign Themes

A campaign theme is one of the best ways to tie your activities together and motivate employees. Don't forget to connect flyers, e-mails, and voice mail messages into the theme as well. The following are themes that other companies and organizations have found successful:

Sports

Everyone becomes a team player when you tie your campaign to sports. Kick-off your campaign with a tailgate party. Departments can make up the different teams or sporting events. Set up a mini-golf course, briefcase toss or wastebasket free-throw, charging participants to enter. End the campaign with a trophy awarded to the department with the highest participation or most wins.

Exotic Locales

Whether you transform your campaign into a Hawaiian luau, African safari or the Australian outback, employees are sure to have a wild time. Encourage staff and volunteers to dress the part of a local. Host a lunch with theme-related food. Organize a scavenger hunt or hula-hoop contest.

Historical Eras

Go back in time to the Wild West, Psychedelic Sixties, Roaring Twenties or Renaissance. Have staff dress up in clothing from your chosen era and decorate their office. Transform an office into a jail cell, round up executives who have to post "bail" for their release.

Lights! Camera! Action!

Have employees dress up as their favorite characters from movies or TV shows. Act out a plot that involves United Way. Incorporate movie plots or famous lines into flyers and e-mails. Raffle off movie tickets, TVs and video gift certificates.

Olympics

Celebrate diversity by transforming departments into various countries with décor and dress to match. Organize an international potluck luncheon where employees bring their favorite ethnic dishes. Host a mini-Olympics tournament. Invite United Way agency speakers to talk about various cultures throughout the Salt Lake area. Showcase music from around the world.

Mardi Gras

Everyone loves a party so why not model your campaign after the biggest party in the world —Mardi Gras. Invite a jazz band to play at your kick-off event. Hold a parade float contest, with departments decorating shoeboxes as floats. Sell bead-o-grams (beads with thoughtful messages attached). Host a Cajun potluck.

Tune into the Community

Music is a great way to get everyone moving to the United Way beat. Hold a karaoke kick-off party. Have participants and volunteers dress up as their favorite musician. Sell employees' old CDs. Hold a musical talent show. Organize a sock hop. Raffle off stereos or CDs.

Games and Contests

Games and contests are a great way to promote United Way and have a little fun. They're also a great way to foster a healthy competitiveness among different departments or floors. Take a look at the following ideas to see which games would inspire your employees:

Baby/Pet Picture Match Game

Invite employees to try their luck at matching baby or pet pictures to pictures of employees. Charge employees to vote and award the entry with the most right answers with a fun prize.

Bingo

Sell bingo cards to employees and get local stores or company vendors to donate prizes.

Casino Day

Set up a couple of black jack tables, hold a bingo game and offer free food.

Children's Drawing Contest

Invite employees' children to draw a volunteer activity or someone helping someone else. Charge a fee for each entry. Have employees vote on the winning entry.

Karaoke Party

Have participants pay to enter the contest or pay to have company executives sing the song of their choice. Have costumes and props available.

Kiss the Pig/Donkey Contest

Post pictures of select managers next to a piggy bank. Have employees vote for the manager of their choice by donating coins and cash. The manager with the most money literally kisses a live pig or donkey.

Pie in the Face Contest

Set up a target range for employees to throw pies at their managers. Charge for each pie tossed.

Pumpkin Carving/Decorating Contest

Have a local business donate pumpkins. Have employees/or departments decorate them. Display the pumpkins and set up containers next to them. Have employees vote on their favorite pumpkin by giving money to the appropriate container.

Scavenger Hunt

Have employees pay an entrance fee to hunt for hidden items around the office or neighborhood. Equip employees with Polaroid cameras and give them the task of taking pictures of their team in front of the office or neighborhood landmarks. Give employees a time limit. Award the winning team a prize.

Trivial Pursuit/Chess/Scrabble Contest

Recruit employees to play in a chosen board game. Create a pool around the winning team or allow employees to move/acquire a game piece for every returned pledge card.

Ugly Tie or Ugly Earring Contest

Have contestants pay to enter the ugliest tie or earring contest. Take pictures of the participants with their tie or earrings and have employees "vote" on the ugliest tie and earrings by contributing a dollar.

Sports Related Events

Bowl-a-Thon Organize a bowling contest at a local bowling alley or set up makeshift lanes at the office. Have participants pay an entry fee. Give the winning team a prize.

Executive Chair Race Set up a relay course for executives to go through, either sitting in a chair or on tricycles. Let observers “bet” on their favorite contestants.

Olympics Have employees compete in outrageous athletic events for prizes, which could include a briefcase toss, wastebasket free throw, tug of war, egg toss, bat relay, etc. Charge people an entrance fee and allow people to place bets.

Miniature Golf Provide putters and build a nine-hole course featuring slinkies, staplers, chairs and other creative obstacles. Have participants sign up in teams of two. Entrance fees are based on management level with upper management paying the highest fee.

Food Related Events

Bake Sale/Cookie Exchange
Have employees bake their favorite cookie or other goodies. Sell plates of the treats to employees.

Chili Cook-Off
Have employees cook their favorite chili recipe and organize a panel of “expert” judges to decide on the best recipe. Charge employees to sample the goods.

Chocolate Bonanza
Sell chocolate bars with your campaign theme printed on them.

Employee Cookbook
Have employees donate their favorite recipes to be collected, published and sold in a company cookbook. A variation of this theme is to sell hint books on golf, gardening, etc. Have employees’ children provide illustrations.

Ice Cream Social
Set up an ice cream bar with a variety of favorite toppings. Charge employees by the scoop.

Mini-Indy 500
Rent or borrow remote controlled cars and set up an “Indy 500” race. Use office supplies to make the track more interesting. Teams can be sponsored to compete. Spectators can place bets on the winner.

Volleyball/Softball/Touch Football/Basketball Challenge
Play real or improvised games with teams of employees. Charge an entrance fee or a canned good for each participant. Have spectators bet for the winning team.

International Food Day
Employees can celebrate their diversity by serving foods from around the world. Employees can purchase tickets redeemable for food items at the event. Award prizes for the best entrée, dessert, etc.

Lunch Box Auction
Have employees create gourmet lunches to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Give prizes for the most creative, nutritious, elegant or humorous.

Tailgate Party
Create a tailgate party in the parking lot or company cafeteria with all the usual football fair: hotdogs, chips, soda, peanuts, etc.

Other Great Ideas

The following is a list of successful miscellaneous morale and money raisers:

Auction Auction off staff services (i.e. baby-sitting, oil change, lunch for a week), executive-parking spaces, donated merchandise or services. Try conducting the auction over your intranet site.

Balloon Pop Have businesses donate prizes. Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside some of the balloons with the name of a prize. In other balloons, put a note with a United Way fact. Have employees purchase and pop balloons.

Blue Light Specials Host daily or weekly "Blue Light Special" rallies throughout the office. Serve food and have a United Way agency speak on a particular topic.

Book, Music and Video Sale Have employees donate old books, CDs and videos for a company or department wide sale.

Car Wash Charge employees for getting their car washed by management. Take and sell pictures.

Coin War Set up large empty water bottles for each department or floor in the cafeteria. Have employees drop their spare change into the bottle. Coins are positive while paper money is negative. Employees can sabotage other bottles by dropping paper money into them. The group with the most money wins, with the money going to United Way.

Comedy Hour Ask a local comedian or improv group to donate their services over the lunch hour. Have employees buy tickets to attend.

Craft Sale Have employees showcase their talents and sell their goods to fellow employees.

Dress Down or Up Day Have employees buy the right to dress casual or silly for a day. Variations include "Silly Hat Day," "Sport Team Day" or "Ugly Shoes Day."

Flower Event Have a local florist donate flowers. Sell the flowers at the office to employees. This is great in conjunction with Secretary's Day or Valentine's Day.

Health and Giving Event Have each department host a health event such as a yoga class, stress reduction workshop or nutrition and personal trainer consultation. Charge employees to attend each event.

Raffle Have local businesses donate great prizes for a raffle. Sell raffle tickets to all employees or anyone who turns in a pledge card (whether they give or not).

Spelling Bee Organize a spelling bee with participants paying an entry fee. Have other employees pay to place bets on the winner. Award the winners with a special incentive.

Vacation Day This is probably the most effective and appreciated event. Have employees "buy" a vacation day by contributing a day's wages to United Way.

Saying “Thanks”

After a successful campaign, it's important to say “thanks” to all the employees who volunteered their time and energy. Here are some ideas to convey your gratitude:

- Insert “thank you” notes with paychecks or pay stubs.
- Host a “thank you” breakfast or luncheon at a great restaurant or have management cook food on office premises.
- Pass out candy with a personalized note from management.
- Host a cake or ice cream social.
- Hand out pens, hats, T-shirts or notepads with the United Way logo on them.
- Hand out balloons or flowers.
- Organize a kids parade by having children from a United Way agency walk around your office distributing candy.
- Partner with kids from a United Way agency and have them draw “thank you” cards for employees.
- Present an engraved plaque to the department with the highest participation.
- Start the day on the right foot by delivering coffee and pastries to each employee's desk.

Prizes and Incentives

Prizes and incentives can be big or small —people just like to be recognized and appreciated. If you don't have a budget, contact your company vendors or area businesses for donated goods. The following is a list of well-received enticements:

- Dinner at the CEO's home
- Free hotel stays
- Free oil changes
- Gift certificates to local stores
- Gift certificate for a massage or manicure/pedicure
- Movie or video passes
- Open soda machine
- Prime parking spaces
- Restaurant gift certificates
- “Sleep in Late” awards
- Time off —either a day, half-day or even a couple of hours
- Vacation packages